

New Plays Filling the Theatres.

Conversational Season in Plays May Be Expected

Trend Shown in Early Dramatic Samples Makes It Safe to Prophecy a Talkative Winter in the Theatres.

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

It is early to speak of what the new theatre year may bring forth, but there already has been enough evidence of its character to make it safe to prophecy a conversational season. It is not difficult to find a reason for this preference on the part of playwrights. Nothing is easier than writing the kind of dialogue which seems to create roars of approval in a theatre, although it would pass unnoticed anywhere else. No play is likely to be more talkative than Thomas Robinson's "The Skylark," which was the first to show the tendency of the dramatists this year. It is certain that this playwright's friends took him for a writer of fine epigrams. Nothing else could have excused the production of a play that failed to comply with so many of the ordinary requirements of a drama intended for public performance.

Maybe, after all, Mr. Robinson is a writer of clever dialogue. When the heroine shrieked: "I don't know what I want but I'm going out to get it!" the spectators howled almost as loudly in approval as Miss Charlotte Walker had in delivery. The other night at the Times Square Theatre two characters, with supposedly little in common, were attempting unsuccessfully to carry on a conversation.

"What sort of a President do you think Harding will make?" asked the captain of industry.

"Yes," answered the absent-minded playwright.

If the subway had subsided there could have been no greater uproar in the auditorium of the theatre. The answer must be profoundly witty. Of course, there are simple and more or less caducous minds to which the talk seems like twaddle. There was much of the wit of "Honors Are Even" that had the same sound. Yet it never failed to set the audience into hilarious cackling. So it must be true that Mr. Mearns also wrote witty dialogue, however ominous may be the occasional sinking spell that assails the elderly listener.

Of course, this sort of a thing is vastly easier than writing a play. Easiest of all to the playwright must have been the discussion of his profession with its introduction of all the old wheezes about actors that have for years done good service in the theatre. Mr. Mearns, however, was brash to dramatize himself so early in life. He might have thought of something else for the present and saved that more facile task for his old age. But it seemed doubtful, after all, if there had been any mistake in connection with "Honors Are Even." The first New York public to hear the play greeted it with unusual cordiality. Of all the passages none bore so genuine a relation to life as the scene with the youthful automobilist. The conversation of the boy in the opening tableau was real. The rest of the new play never seemed to grow out of the medium of the theatre.

It is a boon that the gist of "Getting Gertie's Garter" is words and not deeds. It is lucky that its incidents are said and not done. Else the safety of Mr. Woods's enterprise would be imperilled. There is a singular lack of imagination, however, in the phrases that Mr. Hopwood and Mr. Collinson have devised. They are so occupied with the pursuit of the double meaning that they have no time to sprinkle their text with any wit of their own. The fun is altogether of the situation which it ought to be in farce without, however, such complete abandonment of all incidental humor as this bald text reveals.

While it follows its models from France in this respect and keeps close always to the fun of the situation, "Getting Gertie's Garter" differs from the French farce in a most important particular. There never was a notable play of this kind without the inevitable chastisement that overcame its erring children. Before the final curtain falls the dancer has always paid the piper.

If it is the father of the family who has been the philanderer, there is a nemesis in store for him. He is snubbed by his wife, ignored by his children and made altogether ignominious in the presence of his family. Thus is his step from the straight and narrow path, properly punished. This is the occasional high jinks of the skittish papa justified in the eyes of the French moralist. There is no such castigation of the men and women who crawl about the barn on the stage of the Republic Theatre. It may be urged by Mr. Woods that there is nothing done by any of the characters for which they need forgiveness. But they do talk a lot about what they are about to do.

In "The Teaser" there is less of the strain for verbal brightness. The two talented authoresses, Adelaide Mathews and Martha M. Stanley, are much more concerned with incidents which may not in the least be related so long as they are sufficiently vivacious in themselves. It is thus that "The Teaser" moves. It would be difficult to trace in the making of the farce any knowledge of the Freytag system of construction.

It is in the absence of some scientific method that plays end as most of those written by the two authoresses invariably do. "The Teaser" practically stops because there is no going any further along the same lines. There is, however, no reason to believe that the authors intend it should come to any other sort of a finish. They are interested only in stringing together the necessary number of incidents. They succeed in showing their flapper carrying off the men in the play from the other women who might be thought to possess a title to them. After she had done that once or twice there is no good reason why she should be kept in sight any longer.

Of course, this episodic way of building up a play may not satisfy those exigent persons who are old fashioned enough to want to know what the real end is and are not content with the closing on an unresolved chord. But at all events, it is vastly superior to the method which makes conversation the main end and the epigram the aim of the playwright's labor.

CALENDAR OF THE NEW PLAYS

MONDAY.

FORTY-EIGHTH STREET THEATRE—Marc Klaw's (Inc.) first production of the season, "Sonya," with Miss Violet Heming and Otto Kruger. The play, adapted from the Polish of Gabriela Zapolska, is described as the story of a great love. In the cast are Edward Emery, Jay Fasset, Charlton Smith, Frances Bendisen and Joseph Macaulay. Harrison Grey Fluke directed the production.

THIRTY-NINTH STREET THEATRE—Max Marcin will present "The Night Cap," a new mystery comedy, by Guy Bolton and Marcin, as his second offering as a producer. The leading roles will be played by Jerome Patrick and Miss Flora Sheffield. Others in the cast are John Daly Murphy, Jack Haffel, H. Dudley Hawley, Miss Elizabeth Riddon and Ronald Colman.

THE CENTURY PROMENADE (Atop the Century Theatre)—Opening as a regular playhouse, with a new revue, entitled "Midnight Rounders of 1921." Since closing a few months ago, the Promenade has been reconstructed and redecorated. The production has music by Jean Schwartz, Lew Pollack, Owen Murphy and Al Bryant. It has been staged by Allan K. Foster, and the cast includes Jimmy Hussey, Miss Mae West, Brendel and Bert, Moran and Wiser, Clarence Harvey, Miss Ann Toddings, Frank Hurst and Miss Gladys James.

TUESDAY.

CORT THEATRE—"Sonny," George V. Hobart's melody-play, with music by Raymond Hubble and lyrics by Hobart, will be presented by the Selwyns with a company headed by Miss Emma Dunn, Ernest Glendinning, Miss Esther Howard, Miss Mabel Withe, Carl Randall, Richie Ling and George Laurence.

ASTOR THEATRE—"The Detour," by Owen Davis. The cast is headed by Miss Edith Shannon and Augustin Duncan. The play was staged by Mr. Duncan.

WEDNESDAY.

LONGACRE THEATRE—"Nobody's Money," comedy by William Le Baron, presented by L. Lawrence Weber. The cast will be headed by Wallace Eddinger, Will Deming and Miss Helen Lowell. Others will be Miss Regina Wallace, Miss Jean Robertson, Miss Shirley De Me and Howard Gould.



MISS MAE WEST in "Mid-Night Rounders of 1921" Century Promenade



ERNEST GLENDINNING and BERTA DONNE in "Sonny" Cort Theatre



WALLACE EDDINGER and Miss REGINA WALLACE in "Nobody's Money" Longacre Theatre



MISS FLORA SHEFFIELD in "The Night Cap" 39th St. Theatre

MISS EVELYN CAMPBELL in "The Ziegfeld Follies" Globe



MISS VIOLET HEMING and OTTO KRUGER in "Sonya", 48th St Theatre

News and Gossip Heard on the Summer Stages

What Actors, Dramatists and Managers Are Talking About This Season.

NOW the talented Gilbert Emery is to make his debut in another field. After having succeeded as journalist, short story writer and dramatist, he is soon to make his appearance as an actor. Mr. Emery, who is in private life Emory Potkin, wrote "The Hero," which Sam H. Harris produced last spring and will give during the coming season. But Mr. Gilbert, as he is professionally known, will not appear in a play of his own.

Instead he will be the leading actor in support of Miss Marie Dora, who is to be seen in "Among the Lilies." William J. Hurst wrote the play for the actress, who has not been seen in the spoken drama since she was in "Barbara" under Arthur Hopkins's management at the Plymouth Theatre. Many of the company have been selected but it had been impossible to find an actor for the leading role. Worry after a day's search for such an actor, Miss Dora and Mr. Hurst were invited to tea. They were somewhat refreshed from the labors of the day when Mr. Emery entered the room.

Miss Dora looked at Mr. Hurst. Mr. Hurst looked back as hard as he could at Miss Dora.

"The very type!" exclaimed the actress, unable to repress her delight any longer.

"Born for the part," whispered Mr. Hurst in equal ecstasy.

After a while Mr. Emery was approached. He was willing to talk about the play, but he was not to be approached. He was then told that the announcement that he looked the part. Mrs. Elmer Glyn had already told him several years ago that he was the ideal for Paul in "Three Weeks," which was then dramatized. But the fact that he had told the same thing to 233 other men and one dwarf that winter took, as it were, the sting out of the charge. Mr. Emery will, therefore, be the leading man when Miss Dora comes back to the stage. He has had a brief experience in cinema acting.

Gold Diggers Will Abound.

Speaking of "Among the Lilies," it is on record that the play will not have one lady with a past but no less than twelve with very active and scolding presents. Gold diggers will, moreover, abound in the drama this season. When William A. Brady saw his daughter Alice playing the heroine, Cassie Cook, in "Drifting," he is said to have gazed in unconcealed astonishment at her vivid performance. For this heroine, of all the others that will be seen this year, has the most highly colored romance. The more realistic Daughter Alice became the more concentrated grew the gaze of

father William. It was not until after a scene of particularly strong realism that he lost his self-control.

"But, Alice," he called out, partly in admiration, partly in genuine wonder, "where in the world did you learn it all?"

The Face With the Smile.

Next season there will be in all the Shubert theatres women treasurers, or, as one public more readily understands it, women ticket sellers. The Shuberts find that they have in the main had better results in dealing with their patrons through the women box office assistants, and will, therefore, have them in all their theatres with the exception of the Century and the Winter Garden.

Miss Lehr to Act in Canada.

Marie Lehr, who has been for some time a popular actress in London and would have come over here but for the death of Charles Frohman, will act this season in Canada. She is one of a number of well known English actors who will travel all through the Northwest next season without coming to New York.

Caught in the Jam.

The shrieks of the managers, who want the public to be on time at first performances, are long and loud in the land, but it is not always easy to have confidence in their protestations. The manager in which the Casino was opened the other night is a case in point. One door only was ready to admit the audience. The lobby was densely packed. Those spectators counted themselves lucky who were able to cross from the street to the door in ten minutes. It took many a much longer time.

The congestion at the gate was greater still. With their clothes all but torn from them, the battered spectators entered the theatre to find the orchestra playing the overture to a half empty house. Slowly the public, which had gathered in plenty of time, was admitted to the theatre. It took such a light to get in, however, that the audience will not be likely to hurry themselves in the future when a manager wants to begin a performance on time. The discomfort of that crowded lobby will not be soon forgotten by the perspiring crowd that was compelled to spend so much unnecessary time there.

She Makes Them Up.

One of the careful musical comedy managers has a new functionary in his theatre. Although she is invisible the results of her interference in the productions are visible to all. She was once an actress herself in musical comedies. "And she understands makeup," said

the manager, who has had every reason to be satisfied with his new departure. "She has complete control over the makeup of the chorus girls. I have seen pretty girls who were engaged by my stage manager, but appeared on the stage so covered with grease paint that they looked like barbers' poles. They seem to take delight in smearing themselves with so much color that they are not only without beauty but they even seem unlike human beings. Now they are compelled to be as sparing in the use of cosmetics as the principals. You never saw a prima donna, although she might be sitting next to a chorus girl, covered with the same amount of paint and powder. Now, all my girls look just a little bit prettier than anybody else's. It's not all on account of my new line of sight. She is responsible, however, for keeping the girls from spoiling their natural beauty."

The Old Way.

Kate Claxton, who has again come into the public eye through David Griffith's transformation of "The Two Orphans" into a cinema, told the other day to the reporter for THE NEW YORK HERALD an interesting story of the final rehearsal of that famous play, which has lived for nearly half a century always before the eyes of the public.

The account furnishes an interesting contrast to the methods of the day, which regards as indispensable excursions to Atlantic City, Stamford or some other popular place for a "try out." To open an engagement here without a preliminary center elsewhere is known in the profession as opening "cold." But, according to Miss Claxton, there was nothing cold about the old time openings. They seemed, on the contrary, red-hot in comparison with present deliberation.

"Mr. Palmer," she said the other day, "made the company rehearse all day before the performance until late at night. The next morning we were at work by 10 o'clock, although none of us had more than a few hours sleep. All that day we rehearsed without intermission. Here somebody was sending out for a cup of tea. There another hungry actor implored a stage hand to get him a sandwich. Until 6 that night the company was at work. And then do you suppose anybody went home to rest? Not at all. There was only time to snatch a bite, go to the dressing rooms and get ready for the performance. That was the only kind of a try out we ever had in those days."

Sitting Up With Shakespeare.

Walter Hampden is going to carry on in the matter of the Bard of Avon. He will next year add "Othello" and

"Twelfth Night" to his list of Shakespearean plays, which already includes "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "The Merchant of Venice," "Romeo and Juliet" and "The Taming of the Shrew." Mr. Hampden will begin his season in Canada, and will for the first time play in the South and the extreme West. His return from the Pacific slope will be made by way of the Canadian Northwest.

Cyril Maude will be the star of David Belasco's comedy "Timothy," which he wrote in collaboration with W. J. Hurlbut. Mr. Maude is said to believe that he has at last found a successor to the famed "Grumpy."

When Miss Henrietta Crompton tried to interest the public in a dramatic version of "Pilgrim's Progress" at the Liberty Theatre some years ago she had to give up the costly effort. Now the Community Players of Pasadena have just given four out of door representations before large audiences. There were more than two hundred actors in the twelve episodes.

Mr. Langner received credit in THE NEW YORK HERALD for his share in the success of "Tangerine," but the following letter is willingly printed:

"I want to correct an impression that seems to be about that I was in some way responsible for Mr. Lawrence Langner's name being left off the programme of 'Tangerine.' The story of 'Tangerine' is Mr. Langner's and Mr. Bartholomae's, and I want them to have full credit for it.

"I believe that the misunderstanding which caused his name to be omitted from the programme has now been cleared up, but since the critics particularly note the freshness of the plot of 'Tangerine' I feel that Mr. Langner should receive his full share of credit for it. Cordially yours, GUY BOLTON."

Fun and Frolic at The Suburban Parks

Indoor and outdoor pools at Tilden's Steeplechase Park are proving very popular. In addition the steeplechase course is thronged, and the other find attraction in the pavilion of fun are much patronized by holders of the combination tickets. The ballroom is well attended by dancing devotees, while Arthur Pryor's Band plays every day.

Whirling wheels and fountains of fire form a twice weekly feature of free events at Palisades Amusement Park, which attracts thousands to the resort every Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Starlight Amusement Park, at 177th street subway station, in the Bronx, will inaugurate "Fun Week" beginning to-morrow. Each evening during the week ambitious amateur vaudevillians will compete for cash prizes. It is planned to make "Fun Week" a succession of old fashioned amateur nights.

Mitty Makes Art of Raw Material

Dancer in 'Follies' Has Transplanted Here Part of Paris Half World.

Broadway has lifted its Volstead goblet to Mitty of "The Follies," the gay dancing sprite transplanted from the Folies Bergere of Paris.

Mitty is just 19 and in private life is the wife of a Parisian banker. With her partner, Tillio, a swarthy, agile young man, Mitty first appeared at the Folies Bergere, where she has been hailed as an artistic triumph for more than a year.

Gilbert Miller, the London producer, saw in her a potential Ziegfeld star while visiting in Paris. He called Mr. Ziegfeld, who had his agents see her. They confirmed Mr. Miller's verdict and Mitty was cabled an offer that caused her to sign on the dotted line.

Mitty is roundly slender, with wavy hair, upon which the lights produce strange glints and flashes. She follows no set formula in dancing. She has taken the raw material of the Parisian half world and made of it a new art product for the theatre.

Mitty is making her first visit to America. She does not speak English, nor does her partner. She has a three room apartment in the quiet purlieu of Washington Square—to be exact the Hotel Lafayette. Here she may have French servants and many Parisian friends, who like herself are transplanted here for the time being.

Mitty began dancing at the age of 8 in Algiers. She never thought of a professional career until she danced. She says: "So she just kept practising from early morning until late at night. One time she was called upon to dance at a charity fête. Tillio was a professional dancer who had won some favor with the public and he was asked to dance with her."

They rehearsed together and each was delighted with the ability of the other. Their professional career began then and has lasted for ten years. Tillio, too, is married to a Frenchwoman, who is not of the theatrical profession.

Seeks Contrasts in Stage Settings

Three of the most gorgeous settings ever made for a musical comedy production are seen in "The Last Waltz," the Oscar Straus operetta, at the Century Theatre. They are the work of William Barratt, who, while a comparative newcomer in the field of scenic art, has already established himself as a painter and designer of breadth of facile technique. The modern impressionistic manner has been followed in the creation of the settings, considerable reliance being placed upon draperies and curtains. A semi-Oriental note is conveyed throughout.

As the action is laid in a mythical kingdom in the Balkans there has been no restriction made upon the imagination of Mr. Barratt, the manuscript called for warm, vivid colors, and the artist has combined striking reds, oranges and blues with a suggestion of Oriental luxuriance.

"I am a firm believer in contrast and emphasis in stage settings," said Mr. Barratt at his studio in the Century Theatre. "I executed my first act settings—a drawing room in a castle—in comparatively quiet tones. The second act settings called for much bolder colors and I employed corals and gold with a touch here and there of onyx. The scene represents a huge ballroom in a Balkan castle. Through a vast bay window at the rear, which extends from the floor to the ceiling, mountains can be seen. Immense candelabra, hanging lamps that suggest lighted toy balloons, two mammoth winding stairways and heavy corse draperies add to the pictorial quality of the setting. Here again I had to steer a different course between the garish and the exotic. I had to convey at all times a semi-barbaric nature of richness and splendor without offense to the eyes of the spectators."

Mr. Barratt also designed the settings of "The Whirl of New York" as well as those of "The Passing Show of 1919." Before he achieved distinction in scenic art he had won wide prestige as an illustrator whose work was featured in scores and inside plates of the pictorial quality of his settings. Here again I had to steer a different course between the garish and the exotic. I had to convey at all times a semi-barbaric nature of richness and splendor without offense to the eyes of the spectators."

Others will be Ed Gallagher and Ed Sheen, reunited in "Erpyt," D. D. H.; William Brack and his band of gymnasts; Jack Wyatt and his Scotch Lads and Lassies, and Ed Furman and Bill Nash.

The chief acts at other vaudeville houses follow:

RIVERSIDE—Harry Carroll's "The Love Race," Nonette.

EIGHTY-FIRST STREET—Victor Moore, Elaine Hammerstein in the photoplay "Remorseless Love."

PROCTOR'S FIFTH AVENUE—Patricia, Frank Davis and Adele Darnall.

TWENTY-THIRD STREET—Kegans and O'Rourke, the photoplay "Wet Gold."

FIFTY-EIGHTH STREET—Dora Hilton and company. King and company.

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH STREET—Mae McDermott, Evelyn Phillips and company.

Attractions in the Brooklyn Theatres

The Montauk is the first of the Brooklyn legitimate theatres to announce its opening date and the attraction that will inaugurate the new theatrical year. Louis F. Werba, manager of the Montauk, has arranged with John Golden for the presentation of "Lightnin'!" at the Gaiety, Manhattan, beginning Monday evening, August 29.

The Santos and Hayes Revue will lead the bill at the New Brighton this week. Others will be Ruth Budd, Joe Morris and Floasie Campbell, Jack McGowan and Billy Glason.

Miss May Wirth will be the headliner at the Orpheum. Others will be Erwin and Jane Connolly and company, Harry Breen and Thomas F. Swift and Mary H. Kelley.

Miss Constance Talmadge in "Wedding Bells" will be the principal photoplay at the Strand.



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